

# Practices and Preachments

SIDONIE MATSNER GRUENBERG

ON BECOMING parents, most of us proceed to give our children the benefit of the experience and mature wisdom we have gathered in the course of growing up. It takes only a few more years of parenthood, however, to discover that in spite of our best efforts the children fail to learn, or that they take our lessons in a sense quite different from that which we intended. We have learned, for example, and try to teach our children, the value of perfect truthfulness and candor. But before we can teach them also that silence is often the better part of a conversation, they embarrass us by saying to our friends what had indeed been said at home, but what was not intended for broadcasting. Or, we had discovered, for example, and tried to teach the children, that honesty is the best policy; but our children startle us by showing that they have learned to consider above all else what is good policy, honesty or no honesty.

Without attempting to generalize about the meaning or value of truth in the abstract, we may feel safe in assuming that both the recognition and the appreciation of truth must await a long period of development in the life of each individual. It takes time for the young child to acquire sufficient skill in perception and discrimination to express himself with some degree of accuracy. He has to learn to distinguish the many objects and persons and qualities that make up his physical environment, and he has to acquire an extensive vocabulary with which to express himself regarding his world. Growth in truth is here a growth in more precise sensing and more precise reporting: it takes time to learn to distinguish colors and forms, to count and to estimate dimensions. Inaccura-

cies awkwardness, mistakes are to be expected. At this stage perhaps most parents are sufficiently understanding to make corrections without emotion, without reproaches; it was only a few minutes, not an hour—there were five cars, not four—I should call that purple, not red. Certainly these are not problems of truth and falsehood.

The child learns to tell the truth, just as he learns to lie, because it pays. A little boy said, "A lie is an abomination unto the Lord and an ever present help in time of trouble." He had learned two lessons and was ready to use each to his advantage as occasion offered. The third lesson in his mind, apparently, was to know when to use each of the others.

Somewhat more difficult for most parents is the stage during which the child recalls with equal vividness what he actually experienced, what he dreamed, what he invented while fully awake, perhaps what he merely wished. The little boy who tells you solemnly that he went up in an airplane, when you know very well that he never came within touching distance of one, may be saying something that is not "true." But he is saying something that is not false, for he is recounting merely what he remembers—having imagined. As an historical fact this remembrance has for him about the same quality as the remembrance of having gone out in the family flivver. Certainly the

need in such cases is not for any moralizing, but for growth into discrimination between what happened and what might have happened.

With the little child reality and fantasy are so mixed in consciousness and subconsciousness that he cannot tell the difference. He aims to please and if what he says seems to please, whether truthful or not, he is likely to

*What have been your perplexities and your experiences in helping your children learn the truth?*

*"How Children Learn the Truth" will be the topic of a symposium at Headquarters on November 22. In advance of this meeting will you write to CHILD STUDY about whatever problems you would most like to hear discussed at this meeting? Subscribers to CHILD STUDY, as well as members of the Association, are cordially invited to participate.*

push it on that basis. Here no issue needs to be made of being truthful or dishonest. The child needs to learn what is approved or acceptable; but first of all he needs to learn to discriminate between what we consider "real," and what is only imagined. A mother who had just moved her family to the country was unpacking her medicine supplies when she was called to the telephone. Coming back, she found her four-year-old son with an open bottle of bichloride of mercury tablets.

Trembling, she asked, "Did you take one?"

"Yes," was his prompt reply. But when he saw how horrified she was, he said, "No, I didn't."

And by that time he really did not know whether he had or not. Evidently he did not take one for he is still alive, but the confusion in his mind was obvious. His answers to the question were related more to what he felt would please his mother than they were to his actual performances. In the same way teachers of older children are often baffled by the foolish answers they get from children who "really know better," until they discover that the children are responding not to the literal meaning of the questions but to the tone of voice or the facial expression.

### Even Fiction Has Its Uses

WE do not object to fiction on principle; we object only when it is offered as a substitute for reality under circumstances that call for "truth." Children who find that their inventions are acceptable may indeed be tempted to go on to make bigger and better stories perhaps with a view to inviting the attention and admiration of adults, or prestige among their fellows, or other benefits. The solution here would seem to be not in the discouragement or disapproval of fiction, but in the development of a clear distinction on the part of the child between the remembered and the imagined, a clear recognition of the nature and the place of invention and of accurate reporting—for there is a legitimate place for each in human intercourse. Nor will the mere acceptance of "imagination" as responsible for "lying" clarify the issues. The child sooner or later discovers when he can escape all responsibility for his words or his conduct by relying upon the parent's confidence in "imagination."

Among adults generally there is the assumption that since learning partakes somewhat of the nature of habit formation, the child must be made to acquire truthfulness as early as he acquires other "good habits." We try, accordingly, to push reproof and instruction down in the age scale in our eagerness to establish the desirable habits with respect to truth telling.

Honesty and truthfulness, however, cannot be treated like habits acquired through finger exercises on the violin, or like standardized practice in putting the toys away. We cannot speak of basic social attitudes and of spiritual values in the same terms as we use for routines of management, personal hygiene, or operating skills. Furthermore from a practical point of view, we shall find that we are not saving time by making drastic demands upon the young child for conduct of which he cannot have the slightest appreciation. At best, we can hope by this method to teach the child to keep his thoughts to himself and to seek out ways of avoiding exposure to censure.

### Which Moral Is at Stake?

ADMITTING that the little child is in the process of becoming truthful, then we shall be able to proceed on a highly individualized plan. At what age is a child imaginative? When does he become clearly aware of what he is doing? Does this child get satisfaction out of his sense of righteousness as he accepts the penalty that follows confession? Does that other child get more satisfaction out of successful escape through the use of ingenuity than he gets from the original misdeed? There is perhaps as much harm in cultivating self-pity as in cultivating superficial shrewdness; in any case it is important for the child to know just what is objectionable in the disapproved conduct, and just what is of value in frankness and candor. It is very confusing to a child to make him promise to do or not to do, or say that he is "sorry," before he is quite clear in his own understanding as to what all the to-do is about.

The attainment of truthfulness cannot be expected to flow "naturally" as a matter of course out of the ordinary growth and experiences of childhood. The young child finds himself so frequently in conflict with the established order, with rules and prohibitions, with arbitrary intrusions upon his happiness, that it is no wonder he finds numerous occasions to lie, to deny, to dissemble, to invent, to prevaricate. Those who are to teach him a better way must first of all make him feel sure that they are not his enemies but his friends, that they share his own interests, that they have his welfare at heart, that they desire to further his purposes, rather than frustrate them. He has to learn first that truth and sincerity have decided values in his relations with his most immediate and intimate associates, and gradually extend his sensitiveness and appreciation to more remote and more subtle forms of honesty and fair dealing.

At the same time we may recognize several factors that early interfere with a direct, honest and matter-



of-fact acceptance of life. Even a very young infant can learn to dissemble—to make a sound or a grimace that will bring him food or attention when he is not hungry or in distress. It would be rather far-fetched to say that such a child is deceitful when he makes the noise which the mother interprets as meaning, "I am hungry," although there is still an hour to the next feeding. But the processes are very much like those which later in life develop into deceit and misrepresentation. The child can learn to buy favors, to draw attention to himself—or from himself, if necessary—to project the soft answer or the sweet smile that turneth away wrath. Later he learns that, after having participated in some mischief, telling the truth may bring pain and humiliation, and he resorts to the convenient evasion.

Many parents seem to expect of the child that he will forego this ever present help because, in the philosophies of adults, lying is "wrong." Such expectations are not warranted. In the lives of most children there is little more to teach the virtues of truthfulness than the formal doctrine in the strict sense. Subterfuge is frequently resorted to for a hundred purposes that the parents consider legitimate or even essential; but for the child the subterfuge becomes a lesson in dealing with the irrational. As the child grows older and his vicarious experience is expanded to include the affairs of men and women in business, war and courtship, with their concomitants in government and law enforcement, he learns that everything is fair when dealing with enemies or rivals—that is, with those whose purposes conflict with ours, with those who cannot be reasonable.

### Tit for Tat

ADULTS are driven to distraction by children's untruthfulness or unreliability. An aunt was left in charge of three children for the summer, and her mind and theirs seemed never able to get together. Finally she resorted to what seemed to her a good device for impressing the children with the value of truthfulness. She deliberately made promises that she did not intend to keep; she systematically made assertions that they knew were not true. That is a dangerous device, for it may teach children that adults differ from children only in being more—or less—skillful in using trickery and deceit; or it may teach them that they would have to be more shrewd or more nimble to get along with an aunt like that. It should not be necessary for adults to place themselves on the level of the very young child in a contest of wits and endurance. Children between nine and twelve have sufficient imagination not only to

invent useful lies as occasion arises, but to contemplate seriously the supposition that aunts and other adults are systematically untrustworthy, and to consider the practical results of a world of mutual mistrust and deception. Certainly it should not be necessary at that age to carry out a practical demonstration.

There are great individual variations as to what will tempt or impress children and as to what will make them do certain things. So also the age at which they learn what it means to be truthful varies tremendously, and the number of untruths told in the process of learning to tell the truth also varies greatly.

### Putting Conscience to the Test

ONE boy who is, perhaps, the most conscientious type of child now, took the longest time in learning on the early level. When he was a little over four years old he asked his mother what "conscience" was. He was told it was something inside one which told one what was the right thing to do, which made one know when one had done the right thing or the wrong thing.

He replied thoughtfully, "I have never heard it."

The next day his mother saw him leave his older brother's room, close the door, and run into his own room and close the door. His brother's room was full of wires and electric contraptions, with signs like "Don't touch!" and "Danger!"

Feeling sure that the little fellow was up to something, the mother asked, "Where did you put what you took out of your brother's room? You will put it right back."

He did as he was told and then going to his mother, said, "I never heard it or felt it. Really, mother, I didn't!"

He had done the very worst thing he could imagine—that is, going into the room where his brother had impressed him more than his parents ever could with what was forbidden; and he knew he had done "wrong." Another child would have taken it on faith, but he had to find out whether he could hear his conscience. Up to that time he had not yet; but his mother assured him that some day he would.

Some children like to tell the truth about the objectionable things they have done because they like to get approval for confessing. This means that some people make a bargain with children, by which confession absolves them from penalty for any wrong doing. If that is what we want to teach, it is all very well: but we must be very sure that it is, and very sure of what the child is learning. It is important to teach a child that it is better to acknowledge an error, a misdeed, than to conceal it with lying. But the



confession, whatever virtues it may have, is not itself a means of absolution; whatever wrong has been done must still be righted so far as possible. The merit of the acknowledgment of wrong done is maintaining mutual trust among human beings, in maintaining self-respect and dignity in spite of wrong doing.

In a schoolroom some boys were passing a piece of paper containing some ungallant comments upon a much disliked girl in the class. When it reached one of the boys who was rather ashamed of such a performance, it stopped. Another boy, who in turn felt that it would be a pity to let so noble an effort fall short of its complete purpose, rewrote the disagreeable words on another piece of paper and started it off in a different direction. This paper was intercepted, and of course the teacher was scandalized, and of course she had to know who wrote it. At first neither the original culprit nor the one who had made the copy admitted guilt; one felt that he had only transmitted what the first had initiated and the other felt that *his* note had been safely destroyed. Finally a confession was won from both, and the boy who had made the copy was sent home with a letter to his parents. The mother talked it over with him, and impressed him with the fact that what concerned her most was that, having written such a nasty thing, he had not admitted it when confronted with his guilt.

The boy was very penitent and tearful as he said,

"All right, the next time I write a note like that I will admit it at once."

That is a typical response to a double reproach. He had lost sight of the fact that it was the wording in the note which in the first place was offensive.

Strangely enough it is the more intelligent and more conscientious parents who have the most difficult problems with respect to teaching their children to be truthful. There is a tendency to set up absolute standards and ideals of perfection that bring their own difficulties. Sometimes there is an affectation of righteousness designed to place before the children what the parents consider high standards, or excellent models. But more often there is a sincere attempt to protect children from experience with the evil and sordid, on the assumption that knowledge of crime or injustice, with greed or cruelty, will somehow affect the child injuriously, as might contact with measles or typhoid fever.

The problem of evil is not to be solved by denying it. While parents have the responsibility of protecting the child against injury, they serve him poorly by concealing from him the fact of danger; as early as the time of Buddha the futility of such protection was recognized. Parents cannot make sure of protecting the child permanently except they make sure of his early removal from all the hazards of life. The

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## The Dilemma of Sex Education

*The problem of the emotions is at once deeper and more difficult than any other task in education.*

ANNA W. M. WOLF

THE approach to the problem of sex education during the past decade has, like all other recent efforts to find solutions, been plunged into the abyss of doubt. With sex as with many other problems, science, previously seized upon so hopefully as the way and the light, has succeeded in raising problems more profound than it has solved. It has withheld answers to questions so fundamental that it is small wonder if we feel thwarted in our thinking and virtually at a standstill as regards any consistent educational procedure. So aware are we today of the pitfalls of almost any course we pursue

that the temptation to adopt the fatalistic shrug threatens to dominate our attitude.

In the old days—how recent they are!—we had faith that "the facts of life" imparted to the younger child as part of nature study and to the older frankly and with an impersonal medical attitude uppermost would go far to dispel the furtiveness and shame surrounding the matter. Among many who felt themselves modern, this course usually included a certain amount of casual nudity among the sexes, young and adult, as part of the family procedure. Nudity was deemed "natural" and therefore a prophylactic meas-

ure against the impurities of a strenuous sex interest and experimentation in later years. Prudery, it was felt, was the real enemy of purity and enlightenment, and prudery would be impossible, it was assumed, if the naked human body could be known without guile. I remember an animated denunciation by one of our popular columnists of the essential pruriency which prompted public censorship of a certain play which treated the sex relation frankly and seriously:

"If more little boys and girls were brought up with a knowledge of the facts of reproduction and permitted to see their parents quite casually in the shower bath, there would be none of the unclean mindedness in later years leading to such stupid censorship," it was argued.

To which a confrère in his own column the next day replied, that in sex education parents should evidently take as their motto "Say it with showers!"

### Rediscovering Complexities

THE sentiments which lifted the taboo from the disinterested pursuit of knowledge concerning sexual matters were so deeply founded in human needs and so profound in their consequences that historically they will deserve to rank among the momentous intellectual and spiritual events of the early twentieth century. The tempo of the Victorian age was such that reaction was long overdue and, if mankind were ever again to regain its sanity, bound to burst with fierceness. But now that we are "emancipated" and can call a spade at least a spade, we are discovering, or rediscovering, that sexuality is essentially no such simple, natural biological matter as our first sanguine faith bade us regard it, nor one which can be counted upon to take care of itself if unwholesomely educated adults do not interfere. It now turns out to be an infinitely complex psycho-biological matter, differing between the sexes and among individuals, likely to go askew because of constitutional inclinations or because of wholly fortuitous, unforeseeable and uncontrollable factors; a pot of gold at the rainbow's end, no matter how realistic our pretenses; never so adjusted but what the call for re-adjustment and re-education is not just around the corner throughout the whole of life's span. Moreover, the demands of society are so often inimical to the needs of individuals that problems created from without further complicate a matter already in unstable equilibrium by virtue of its inner structure. Neuroses and thwarted lives we still have with us whether we educate "wholesomely" for premarital continence and the single standard, or "wholesomely" for uninhibited sexual variety and experimentalism. Psy-

choanalysis, the first systematic clinical science of sexuality, is intensely conservative regarding any mental hygiene program, and having introduced revolutionizing concepts into the whole field, remains thus far silent as to educational techniques.

The trend of thought in matters of sex education, at least that clearly enough formulated to find its way into print, still reflects two distinct shortcomings which only advances in our whole philosophic conception of personality, as well as more specific knowledge of the subject of sexuality from birth on, can remedy. First, most opinions are based on an extremely rudimentary knowledge of the nature of sexuality, particularly infant sexuality. Second, the puritan taint in our point of view regarding sex in childhood is betrayed in the continuous attempt to intellectualize, to medicalize, to factualize. The tacit assumption everywhere (despite occasional sentences to the contrary) is that children's sex interests are of an entirely intellectual nature and can therefore be satisfied on that plane; that, for example, masturbation is nothing more, at least up to adolescence, than a discovery resulting from "random movements," harmless, and yet (inconsistently) a "bad habit"; that the child's loves and hates are non-sexual in character; that at adolescence comes an awakening to real sex feeling; and that to the wholesomely educated of both sexes in adult life orgasm capacity and a sense of fulfillment accompany the sex act under circumstances of mutual love.

### Not an Intellectual Problem

IT is noteworthy that both the ideal and also the practical test of whether all is well with the child's sex life is assumed to be the absence of sexual emotion and behavior. Curiosity and questions, it is true, he is allowed, but these essentially because we are assured that knowing the answers and talking freely will make him less rather than more sexual, and will postpone his whole psychological awakening until nearer the time when social conventions permit its expression in marriage. This new medical puritanism vacillates between teaching sex as a system of objective facts—which it is not—and promising the rare rewards of adult sexual attainment and psychological fulfillment, as the result of these facts plus education in a type of sexual and social idealism to which personal adjustment is usually in no way related.

If we are, as I believe, at a turning point in our thinking on sex education, it is because we are becoming aware that it is an emotional rather than an intellectual or even a moral problem which we face.



Our concern must now be shifted from trying to preserve our children's innocence by imparting facts (instead of by withholding them as our grandmothers did) to desiring and attempting to find a technique for education in positive and vigorous sexuality. Mankind's "instincts," when it comes down to it, are not so infallible that they invariably assert themselves healthfully despite the strictures of an ever cautious social order. We are constantly amazed at the sexual deprivations which can be suffered by the individual and the race still go on. Our problem becomes one, not only of education for sex in adult life, but also of facilitating the normal development of real sex feeling from infancy on, instead of attempting in childhood to intellectualize or spiritualize it out of existence. We shall, I believe, come to feel, at least as concerned about the child who has never been interested in sex or who has taken his discoveries "just as a matter of course," as we do about the child who seems to us overcurious, puzzled or given to various forms of sex play. In short, a person may be ever so informed and at the same time ever so inhibited; though he be versed in sexology and able verbally to proclaim the beauties of the sex relation he may, nevertheless, be personally quite undeveloped as to sexual capacity.

### The Capacity to Love

NOR is inhibited sexuality caused only by direct mal-education. There are neurotic attitudes in parents which deeply affect their children and yet are so subtle that they are easily overlaid with a veneer of free talk and spurious wholesomeness. There are also, we must conclude, persons in whom the normal expression of instinct is weak or partially thwarted in their inherited make-up, who need special guidance or encouragement to take a positive sexual attitude rather than one of indifference or shrinking which may be more natural to them.

What we want most to give our children is the capacity to love, but having thus simply stated the need does not, alas, make it easy to effect. Precept is of little avail; for we actually need more knowledge than we possess to recognize and direct those infantile manifestations which will eventually comprise this capacity. We need also the wisdom to distinguish the capacity to love from its dangerous imitations—the pretense of love which is merely a concealment of unconscious hate, sentimentality, self-love, a destructive trend toward self-punishment, an empty and childish kind of doing or being good in which no real self has ever been attained.

When scientists are silent what can parents do?

The danger of laymen mingling in the current of psychiatric controversy is that from a practical point of view there emerges only more darkness, additional reminders of the infinite pitfalls awaiting the human sexual instinct. Hints as to the guidance of the young appear for a moment, only to be demolished the next instant—a predicament consistently with us despite the ever ready formulas of the superficial.

Is there such a thing as sex education on principles which we can honestly say have any worth? Or, to use terms more in accord with current conceptions, do we yet possess the knowledge to enable us to guide developing sexuality toward goals calculated to bring individual fulfillment as well as social acceptability?

Whatever the answer, parents are still obliged to falter on. We could not, if we would, abandon the task. With each inflection of our voices when sex matters arise, we teach our children not so much with words and ideas as with laughter, with frowns, with our moods in general; with our own capacity to love manifested from day to day and absorbed by our children, do we teach them. It would seem at times as though happy marriages are almost hereditary, so tragically unable are we to learn by our parents' mistakes, so pursued are we by the nemesis of repeating their essential attitudes whatever they have been. Possibly the only principle which psychiatry can offer us is this one, "Put your own house in order. The solutions of your own sexual problems, the manner and the direction of your loving and hating are to be the paramount facts in your children's emotional development and happiness. Everything else is secondary."

Although everything else is secondary we must nevertheless do what we can with what remains. Even when we ourselves have failed and know that we betray our failure we are still bound to do the best we can. Though wisdom of the brain be a poor tool as compared to wisdom of the instincts, still we must use whatever is at hand.

### Counting the Gains

A FEW gains we have really made: First, the lifting of the ban on honest questions, discussion, research in matters sexual. Recognition of the child's freedom to ask and the parent's obligation to equip himself with the requisite facts and vocabulary to answer questions can only be accounted incalculably good and salutary. The parent's question "When?" can unhesitatingly be answered "Whenever the child asks the question in good faith—probably the sooner the better." We also need to know that we must often



make our explanations again and again because of the young child's native tendency to preconceptions about birth, sexual intercourse, anatomical differences, and his desire to distort in accordance with his private wishes. Despite these tendencies parents must do their best steadily to clarify the child's speculations.

## The Necessity for Meeting Youth's Problems

"THE child who never asks" is a more difficult problem because we are, even more than usual, on unknown territory. As a rule, though not always, this attitude is the result of the child's sensing of his mother's shyness in the matter, though she may believe herself ready and have religiously armed herself. We are probably playing safe if we seek occasions to open the subject with such children. Six or eight years old seems the longest that we should wait in silence. The birth of a baby in the family or among our friends, the arrival of young animals, the observation of anatomical differences in the opposite sex, are all normally the starting point for questions and if the child does not use them as such, the parent himself should put the question to the child and supply the answer. As he gets older the perception of the many sidedness of sex should become apparent, the variety of moods with which it may be approached. Laughter should enter in, for momentous as sexuality is, there are, thank heaven, its lighter sides and amusing aspects. The sex joke has a very real place in our psychic economy though possibly a relatively adult mind is required to profit by the release of tension afforded. It seems fair too, to warn the child who speaks freely of all matters within the family, that certain words or facts are not customarily spoken of among relative strangers and are likely not to be tolerated. This does not mean a prohibition on discussions with his contemporaries which seem both inevitable and necessary.

Another real service to mankind was made when all the horror stories about masturbation were scrapped and it was more generally known to be a well-nigh universal practice. It is a great deal to realize that insanity, epilepsy, eye trouble, impotence or "moral weakness" will not result. If the child is well adjusted and happy, it is best treated by ignoring it; and if he is not, the causes for the unhappiness and maladjustment should be sought and the masturbation regarded as the child's way of securing consolation. Fantasy concerning sex relations as an accompaniment to masturbation is usual. Less is known since more is repressed about these fantasies in the years before six, and there is little the parent can do other than know that they exist, that fears,

anxieties, negativism and various forms of misconduct may ensue from the resulting conflicts, and treat these things not too seriously. The usual heterosexual fantasies of the adolescent are normal and necessary and the child may be greatly relieved by reassurance from a parent—the father in the case of the boy, the mother in the case of the girl.

It may be wise, too, to warn adolescents of both sexes, especially when they are leaving home for camp, boarding school, college, or wherever the occasion arises, of the facts of homosexuality with sufficient discussion to help them toward some technique of meeting it should the occasion arise and some slight orientation toward regarding it as a medical rather than as a moral problem.

The theory of psychoanalysis rests upon certain discoveries (some will say speculations) concerning the nature of infant sexuality. Science can ill afford to ignore them. Whether parents have anything to gain by delving into technical matters which thus far admittedly have scarcely any educational application in the layman's hands is an open question. Can the intelligent lay parent consciously do anything to help a child in the adequate resolution of his Oedipus conflicts? What is the wise course in matters of weaning, thumb sucking and other habits centering around the oral-erotic phase of life? When and how is it best to impose bladder and bowel restrictions upon the infant? How can the child be helped to accept his own sex role and develop toward a pattern which is preponderantly heterosexual? Should the child see both his parents nude, or is it best, as many psychoanalysts will counsel us, to limit a child's experience of the nude body to his contemporaries, excluding his parents first and foremost?

## Doing the Best We Can

HAS psychoanalysis been a Pandora's Box? It may be that what is meat for scientists is poison for the public, but these dangerous ideas are loose among all who read or listen and cannot be put back. In all of the necessary conduct of daily life parents, whether they would or not, are taking action. Even doing nothing is actually doing something and has its own consequences. Everywhere we are bound to act with imperfect knowledge and with imperfect insight into our own unsolved conflicts which determine all that is truly essential in what we bequeath to our children. This is the essential dilemma of sex education, yet the very recognition of its universality may help to relieve our anxiety and make us at once more humble and more sane in the attitudes we bring to the task.



# Setting Our House in Order

*Leaving the children free to choose is likely to prove a fallacy in religion as in the other vital issues of life.*

ZILPHA CARRUTHERS FRANKLIN

AT ten she thought she would like to marry a minister. At fifteen she was going to devote her life to foreign missions. At twenty-two—thanks to college, the war and the radical ideas of her latest young man—she thought she would throw “the good” out of her scheme of things and pursue “the beautiful.” At twenty-four she was married, but not to the radical artist. During the next few years she was so occupied that she more or less forgot about religion. It was the same with her husband. They weren’t particularly committed to unbelief. Rather, they just didn’t bother to go to church. Besides, who would stay with the baby?

And then the baby grew older and one Christmas began to ask questions.

“Does God look like Santa Claus?”

“Who’s the Christ Child?”

“Who were His mummy and daddy?”

“But then why does Jinny sing that song about His being ‘the son of God?’”

They were what are called “serious minded young parents.” They wanted terribly to give their child honest answers. But should they tell him whatever they’d been taught in their own childhood? Or should they reply with the uncompromising unbelief of their “emancipation?” Or what?

This experience—of burying both childhood faith and adolescent revolt under the manifold preoccupations of early married life, only to be confronted by both when the children come along—is so familiar that for most parents simply to suggest it is to call up a whole sequence of present or remembered perplexities. As most of us today first see the problem, it really concerns ourselves more than it does our children. The other and at least equally significant angle—What does a child want or need from religion?—comes later. But first we are compelled to take thought for our own integrity.

Of course for the many for whom faith remains secure within some one of the great traditions, what to tell the children is no problem at all.

Apart from faith which makes discussion irrelevant,

there are several familiar attitudes. One is the compromise of observance—of maintaining the old forms with enough of outward respect to cover one’s private reservations. Another is the retreat into “I don’t know,” which is so simple that it gets nowhere. Still another is militant denial.

The parents who are forced to break old ties at least know what they do *not* believe. Such a mother, who forty years ago “walked out” on God and has raised her family as consistent non-believers is pained and incredulous to find her children, now that they are parents, re-examining all the questions she “settled” for them. They, on their part, feel a certain resentment toward her. At least she made her own issue clear-cut black and white, while they feel that they are called upon to fight a battle which is no less critical because they cannot see their opponent.

This is the dilemma which confronts so many of us today. We are deserted alike by traditional belief and equally uncritical unbelief. And the more we seek to merit our self-assumed claim to intelligent parenthood, the more at a loss we feel when that very intelligence is called upon to go it alone, without benefit of clergy or of its antagonists.

At best we must not be misled into expecting the fruits either of our own heart searchings or of our deepest sympathy with children’s needs to be equal to every demand made upon them. A boy of four had been asking about God. His father, who was reading a new book which he particularly prized, put it down and took the time to explain to the best of his ability that “wherever people are good and do good things, there God is.”

Round eyed, the boy asked, “Is He here in our living room watching me when I’m being good?”

At that moment the telephone called the father from the room. It was hardly a question to be answered on the run, so he said as cautiously as he could, “It’s hard even for grown-ups to understand. but you can think of it that way.”

Returning, what was his amazement to find that the child had torn several pages from the precious



new book which he had just put down. As soon as he saw his father, the child burst into tears, crying, "I didn't want to tear your book, Daddy."

The explanation, so far as a four-year-old could put it into words, was that when his father was called away, the thought of an unseen, all-seeing God "here in the room watching me" alone, was too terrifying. But God was only here when he was good—and so he had done the "baddest" thing at hand "to make God go away."

Our best efforts cannot protect our children thus from sharing our own uncertainties and interpreting them according to their own particular level of understanding. Perhaps there is even a great deal to be gained from such experiences. Certainly what that father and son learned was of far more worth than the sacrificed book. They had found something which was as surely lacking in another family in which the youngest child recently asked something about God at the lunch table. Before the mother could reply, an eleven-year-old sister put in her word:

"My goodness, Bobby must have been talking to the servants again!"

And what could a mere parent say, after that? At least it is something to accept God as a proper topic of conversation, not to be relegated to the servants, but to be discussed quite frankly, even between children and their parents.

## Accepting the Challenge

SUCH experiences make us feel keenly the need for more self-assurance, even while they are adding to our laymen's diffidence, which asks, "Who am I to set myself up among the wise men?" But that is the catch. However we may feel about ourselves, our children are going to set us up among the wise men and expect us to do something about the values of life, including religion. Even if we run away, we are giving our children a definite answer. And so the parent, though a layman, has this excuse for formulating his philosophy of life—he cannot help it.

He cannot reach a satisfactory decision about religion in relation to his children by any short cut, but only through this long way around. When we discard more conventional ways of answering the children's questions as to "the truth about religion" we shall find no ready-made alternatives and must begin by questioning ourselves:

"What do we mean, *religion*?"

"What do we mean, *truth*?"

Walter Lippmann introduces *A Preface to Morals* with the suggestion that when the questioning men

and women of today "put their feelings into words they are likely to say that, having lost their faith, they have lost the certainty that their lives are significant, and that it matters what they do with their lives. If they deal with young people they are likely to say that they know of no compelling reason which certifies the moral code they adhere to, and that, therefore, their own preferences, when tested by the ruthless curiosity of their children, seem to have no sure foundation of any kind. They are likely to point to the world about them, and to ask whether the modern man possesses any criterion by which he can measure the value of his own desires, whether there is any standard he really believes in which permits him to put a term upon that pursuit of money, of power and of excitement which has created so much of the turmoil and the squalor and the explosiveness of modern civilization."

However definite and specific the doubts may be which assail the questioning mind, it is much more difficult to be definite and specific on the positive side. The attempt, for instance, to "define" religion sans theology was made recently in a study group made up of both mothers and fathers. But they were soon lost in a maze of individual interpretation, except for a common tendency to feel that religion expresses itself through the way we live seven days a week and what we feel and do about such things as politics and war propaganda and public playgrounds. That is, as seen by many today, the *function* of religion is social. This is a belief often expressed by liberals of many religious affiliations; reduced to its simplest terms it holds that religion is not a separate and peculiar "department" of life, but rather an attitude toward all of living.

"Who can separate his faith from his actions, or his belief from his occupations?"

## The Making of an Issue

BUT for anything more specific to agree on, they were forced to go back to William James, who, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, arbitrarily stripped religion of all but its personal attributes and defined it as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."

If this is religion, it takes away the old necessity to put up to God sanction for what are only the social or theological conventions of a given day. In a certain evangelical midwestern village, a grandmother of today remembers that when she was a little girl her mother was considered almost too liberal be-



cause she let her children go for a walk Sunday afternoon. The reservation which saved her reputation was that the locale of the jaunt was specified—they could go only through the graveyard and back. Twenty-five years later she herself stood in very much the same relation to her neighbors in the same town when she let her boys ride their bicycles after Sunday dinner—provided they stayed “on the block.” And now the community considers her son’s sons on the verge of being a “little wild” because in their late teens they are permitted to keep the family Ford out until nine-thirty Sunday evenings.

Making Sunday locomotion into a religious issue may seem trivial and far-fetched, but it is not so very different from some of the other questions of convention, creed or ceremonial of which we still make issues.

These, in their own right, however, are legitimate human interests in which children as they develop from one level of maturity to another are bound to want their share. It is much easier to help them get it honestly and satisfyingly if such things are seen in a social rather than a religious perspective.

## What About Sunday School?

To take a familiar question colored by this confusion, many parents are troubled about whether to let their children attend Sunday school when they feel that there is no organized church to which they, as adults, can commit themselves. They don’t want their children “taught nonsense.” But in most communities there are Sunday schools of various sectarian backgrounds in which children are taught with a maximum of liberality and a minimum of creed. Parents have to weigh this against two other sides of the problem.

In the first place, though the old belief that every individual recapitulates the history of the human race is no longer accepted literally by science, it still remains true in a general way; besides it is exceedingly useful as a social and emotional gauge. Children need “child-like faith,” they need pageantry and ritual, most of them need, even, an anthropomorphic concept of Deity. A little girl who had been taught that “God is Spirit” came across a volume of William Blake’s *Job*. She brought it to her mother with the comment, “Of course I *know* God doesn’t look like that, but I’m going to *think* He does, at least until I get bigger.”

The other consideration is that most children at a certain age are bound to be conformists. We accept this in other phases of their life, in their desire to dress like the other girls, to be reg’lar fellers, to

“belong.” Why deny it when the point at issue happens to touch religious observances?

In the days when Huxley was making a revolutionary gospel out of science, a professor, committed wholly to this doctrine, died young with the single injunction that his daughter never be allowed to go to Sunday school. Looking back she recalls with a still poignant pain standing by the gate Sunday morning in her utilitarian play clothes while the other little girls in their starched muslins and pink sashes paraded past. It was shame enough at ten to be forbidden to attend the annual Sunday school picnic even as the guest of her best friend. But that was not to be compared to her embarrassment at fifteen when the same best friend publicly prayed for her soul in “young people’s meeting”—and everyone in the small town high school heard about it.

As James himself goes on to say, it is easier to see what preconceptions his interpretation releases us from than what it impels us toward. It leads us toward “the truth,” of course. But mothers want something a little less abstract and considerably more practical to say to a four-year-old who cries in every rain storm because “Cook says God hasn’t got a rain-coat,” or to a college freshman who has just discovered Nietzsche.

What do we mean, *truth*? For one thing, “how children learn the truth” has a very different meaning when it is linked with religion than with other matters about which children must acquire information and attitudes. When a parent asks “What shall I tell the children about this or that?” he usually assumes that he is in a position to choose among a body of facts which he either knows or about which he can acquire knowledge.\* But when that same parent asks, “What shall I tell the children about religion?” what he really means is “What shall I *think* about religion?” Then, too, as has been pointed out elsewhere in this issue, “what we *teach* the children” and “what the children *learn*” are not the same. But this confusion between fact and faith affects whatever children acquire from adults, whether it is deliberately taught by word, or whether it is learned from the much more impressive schooling of example.

## Science as the Measure of Eternal Verity

It is likely that with increase of scientific knowledge and wider acceptance of scientific formulas in everyday life we have come to think of truth more and more in its strictly factual sense—the kind of truth that can be demonstrated by geometrical propositions or proved by doing something

\* Depending on “facts” also has its pitfalls in sex education. See *The Dilemma of Sex Education* by Anna W. M. Wolf, page 6.



to the diet of guinea pigs. There are even scientists who suggest that the abstract truths of pure mathematics are the keys to a knowledge of Divinity, or as Sir James Jeans says in *The Mysterious Universe*:

"From the intrinsic evidence of His creation, the Great Architect of the universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician."

Obviously one reason for our willingness to accept this demonstrable reality as the measure of truth is that it is a way out of the uncertainty which has engulfed all the philosophers who have sought the same goal by other paths. But now even physical science, with its speculations regarding relativity, has lost much of its ultimate certainty.

In any case most parents are much less concerned about scientific theory than about the profound human need, as sensed in themselves and in their children, for something or somebody to depend upon. This need for security is somehow tied up with another kind of truth, the truth of the emotions and feelings. When Jean Valjean was brought back by the police to confront Monseigneur with the silver candlesticks, the priest ordered the prisoner released. How could he have "stolen" them, when Monseigneur himself had "given" them to him? Who could say that in his wisdom he had not spoken "the truth"? But certainly it was the less obvious and far more difficult truth of the spirit rather than of the letter.

This lies very near the heart of man's age old religious craving—a craving that we do not escape when we become unbelievers in the conventional ways of satisfying it. In *Antic Hay*, Aldous Huxley sets a young teacher to speculating in the midst of the daily routine of chapel. Between the lip service of

the headmaster reading prayers and the impatient indifference of the boys, he finds himself wondering:

"God as a sense of warmth about the heart, God as exultation, God as tears in the eyes, God as a rush of power or thought—that was all right. But God as truth, God as  $2 + 2 = 4$ —that wasn't so clearly all right. Was there any chance of their being the same?"

He never finds an answer to that question, and no more shall we. Perhaps it is enough to have asked it. Yet in assuming that there is a truth of the emotions as well as a truth of the proven fact we come very close not only to religion but also to one of the fundamental teachings of modern psychology. We have been taught, and we believe, that the first duty of parents is to minister to the child's need for security. And for this security he does not need to *know* that  $2 + 2 = 4$  so much as he needs to *feel* that in an ordered universe he and his parents each has his appointed path. His father and mother may not know all about it but at least they know more than he does, and he can depend upon them to interpret—by what they themselves do as well as by what they say to him—as they go along side by side. Little by little as he grows in experience, the boy or girl will do more of his own interpreting; for close as they may sometimes be, the paths on which the children and their elders tread are never the same. Perhaps, then, the ultimate purpose of parental training is to aid our children to carry on through their own experience until they one day achieve the mature security of making their own terms with the Universe.

And how shall we aid them, if we have not tried to set our own house in order?

## As the Romans Do

*At a time like the present, when social custom and convention are frankly challenged, parents must re-interpret and renew their responsibility for guiding their sons and daughters.*

MARION M. MILLER

TO the small child truth is a unit quality and resides in the word of authority which under ordinary circumstances is personified by his parents. Until his faith has been shaken or his trust undermined, the child looks upon his parents not only

as the embodiment of what-is-so, but as the final judge of all matters involving right and wrong. The parent has, or at least so the child unconsciously assumes, arrived at a degree of maturity where skepticism and doubt, which have in some measure shaken his child-



like beliefs, have been so balanced by adult reflection, insight and experience that he has achieved a point of development where he recognizes what is essentially true for him.

Every generation of young people derives its attitudes from those of its elders. It accepts, rejects or re-interprets them in the light of its own experiences, but it never starts from scratch. The adolescent must gradually discover what also is true for him. For many this is a painful process. From believing that whatever "we" do is right—we being the immediate family group—he must in some way achieve the power to weigh what "we" do or believe against the criterion of principles which are his own. These principles are, to be sure, an outgrowth of existing ones, but they should neither be taken over blindly from an older generation nor should they be born of a defiant urge to overthrow the old.

For the child, the right thing to do is that which is customary in his social group; the truth is what is generally uttered around him. Adolescence, or at any rate, later childhood, brings intellectual questioning. The negativism of the small child is emotional in nature. In earlier times, the church, the state and the family hierarchy all cooperated in laying down definite lines of demarcation between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, "what is done" and "what is not done." Then there was a royal road to child training. Provided only his parents were firmly indoctrinated in the accepted tradition, the child, by painstaking and steady practice in toeing the line, was habituated to the narrow path. This presupposed a certainty about ultimate values which no longer exists except in particular instances. Also it presupposes a slow moving, if not a static, society which no longer seems to exist. Certainly no such certainty can remain in our western world, with its conglomeration rather than synthesis of so many diverse racial and national traditions, moving at the postwar tempo that leaves us breathless.

### Learning About the World as It Is

ALTHOUGH the parent may realize that change is not only inevitable but often desirable, and that to be too sure of even one's basic principles may be a sign of stagnation rather than steadfastness, nevertheless, he will realize that for the child security involves security of beliefs as well as of actual physical being. Perhaps it is unavoidable that the child should sooner or later be shocked by the realization that truth and goodness as he has known them within the family circle are not always characteristics of the outside world.

In his *Autobiography*, Lincoln Steffens tells of the

tremendous psychic shock which he experienced when during his preadolescent days he first came face to face with duplicity. How is it possible to guard against this rude awakening for our children? The answer does not lie in giving the child no standards.

No matter how tolerant or how flexible we ourselves are, we must accept the fact that to the small child we represent authority. It remains a challenge to parents to accept the authoritative role and, at the same time, lead the child gradually toward independence of thought and toward confidence in his own judgment which will be based not upon slavish acceptance nor upon merely obstinate rejection.

At a glance it would seem that in training young children we are faced with the simple alternative either of portraying the world as a perfect place into which they must be gradually molded, or of accustoming the child from the very start to the stark reality of things as they are, hoping thereby to develop moral fibre of sufficient toughness to withstand the onslaughts of the world.

### Knowing Whereof We Speak

BEFORE we make this apparently simple decision we might ask ourselves a few questions. Which world, according to our more mature and adult conception, is the real world? Would it be desirable, even if it were possible, to create for the child this fairy land of perfection in which goodness and truth inevitably triumph, as they do in some of the stories that are written for children? On the other hand, can the small child have any true concept of reality as we understand it, or would he inevitably, as Voltaire said "create God for himself if He did not exist"? Furthermore, what is the ultimate goal of our training? Is it to enable the child to survive in the world as he finds it or is it to make him aware of the imperfections of life as it is, so that out of his dissatisfactions may come a better order? And, finally, how can all this be translated and applied to the practical questions of behavior and human relationships which occupy the child day by day?

The first essential of a good teacher is a knowledge of his subject matter. It is not given to every parent to be a philosopher and yet the thoughtful parent who would orientate the child in the world not only of yesterday and today but also of tomorrow, must, at some point, have come to terms with his own belief regarding ultimate truth. Lip service is easily acquired and many a person is all too well acquainted with the superficial patter of equality and toleration. This, however, is by no means a guarantee that the child may not learn the rudiments of prejudice and snob-



bery from that very parent. Unless the concept of the brotherhood of man is seen, for instance, in the daily give and take between mother and the cook, the child may remain quite unaffected by even the most intelligent theoretical discussions of liberalism. What we believe and more particularly, what we are able to carry out in our daily contacts, he will learn.

It comes as a great shock to some parents of adolescent children to discover that in spite of their modern views on education and psychology they are classed as "old-fashioned" by the very young people whom they "understand" so well. This may be inherent in the parent-child relationship at that particular point, or it may be due to the fact that the parent inevitably judges situations by their parallels when he was sixteen or eighteen. Even when we sedulously avoid the obvious clichés—"When I was your age" or "In my time," the implied comparison is there. Having struggled through to a personal appraisal of values we naturally wish to guide our young people to a comprehension and, if possible, an acceptance of truth and right as it has finally been achieved by us. Young people are no more willing to take over our categories than they are to take over our outdoor techniques. In attempting to make our standards of conduct plausible, we antagonize the adolescent who sees in our earnest attitude only an attempt to dominate even in the specific details of his life which he feels competent to handle without interference. In spite of all our excellent training, we are still a little inclined to say "No" too readily.

### Three Ways to Youth's Confidence

How then can we help youth to discover what is true for him, and at the same time avert possible destructive experimentation? Careful schooling in restraint is the first essential. The parent who is shockproof is far more likely to be effective in his casual contacts with the adolescent son or daughter. The second essential is a fundamental self-knowledge. It is salutary to question oneself rigidly: "Why do I disapprove?" "What basic factors are influencing this decision?" "Would this be wrong for any child or only for mine?" Then, having seen his own motives as clearly as that is possible, the parent is ready, honestly and objectively, to discuss the question, prohibition, sex morality, religion or what not.

To be truly helpful, the parent's discussion must have three approaches: The intellectual, which embodying his own experience and that of others lays a theoretical groundwork. This is comparatively simple. Then, the parent must try honestly to see from the child's angle. Finally, and most difficult, he must

try to see himself as a factor in the situation. For instance, in the matter of smoking, is it a matter of right or wrong? Few seventeen-year-olds are willing even to consider the question on that basis. Under given physical conditions it might be inadvisable for particular individuals, yes—but surely few children would see any moral issue involved. The parent who has achieved a high level of maturity might see in his own disapprobation the traces of emotional conflict or social prejudice which he might even recognize as such, and even acknowledge. The child's decision will be based on a consideration of the intellectual and social factors involved, and he will have been helped to his decision instead of being driven to it or backed into it. Moreover, a decision made by the child, even with guidance, is more acceptable to him than a decision made for him.

### Patience—a Parental Virtue

PARENTS are often ill at ease because when they feel themselves inarticulate, they seek formulas by which they can instruct their children, forgetting that the child learns least of all perhaps through direct instruction. Parents are ready to accept this fact in the realm of academic knowledge. They know that children forget and must be taught the same lesson many times with many practical applications, yet in the realm of less tangible teachings, they are inclined to pin their faith on the spoken and printed word.

Many circumstances of life which the adult accepts more or less unconcernedly present puzzling problems to children. It is difficult enough to explain differences in social and economic status as they are evidenced in the lives of many persons a child sees about him; differences in mentality are even more inexplicable. In an aristocratic social order, where one is "born to be" master or servant, leader or follower, man of letters or menial toiler, such questions are less likely to arise, and if they do, they are more readily answered to the child's comprehension or even satisfaction. In a land which at least approximates democracy, we need a different attitude and consequently a different understanding. For the past half century, since the time of Binet's early investigations into individual differences, psychologists have been interested in the careful study of the component factors of mentality and personality. Modern philosophic thought has increasingly stressed the worth of the individual, "the uncommon good in every common man." We hold out the ideal of respect for personality, regardless of the trappings and embellishments of inherited wealth and standing. We must look to

these fundamental principles for our guidance. If we accept the proposition that the individual merits respect, we must accept as its corollary that we are obligated to help the individual become more self-respecting. We must show respect for him regardless of who he is or how young he may be. The child who has never been subjected to the humiliation of being treated as a toy or as a slave will be less likely to adopt these attitudes toward others.

We have already mentioned the force of example. No less important is the effect of the treatment which the child himself receives at the hands of those to whom he looks for guidance and security. If honest and kindly interest in others is the antidote to intolerance, as fear and suspicion are its breeding ground, the child who is protected from the development of hampering fear, the child who never has occasion to

distrust the adults around him, is more likely to be able to accept reality as he grows older. It is unimportant to give the child specific rules of conduct or ready made beliefs. We do not wish to put conduct or attitudes on a habit basis; conduct, after all, is symptomatic. Courtesy is the outward expression of a feeling of kindness and interest in another. Our task, therefore, is to foster in the child fundamental attitudes toward facts and persons which grow out of the finest elements of the personality. We shall not then find it necessary to paint for the child a rosy picture of a world in which conditions and motives are perfect, but we shall have made it possible for him in some slight degree to analyze conduct and motives and to react to them in a way which does violence neither to his own self-respect nor the respect that is due every other personality.

## Psychology Suggests

*The scientific attitude increases both our regard for truth and also our sympathy with children when they fail to live up to adult standards of truthfulness.*

RUTH BRICKNER

"IF WE were to punish ourselves every time a child of ours told a lie, we should come nearer, in the majority of cases, to punishing the right person."

This quotation is typical of a certain point of view not infrequently met today in parent education writings. It indicates that we still have among us those who are forced to resort to reproach and accusation in discussing human conduct. The fact that it is now the parent, rather than the child, who is being held up to shame, changes the object but not the bias of the attack which is animated more by a spirit of reprisal than it is by the spirit of scientific inquiry.

Yet, both the accusatory and the psychologically sound attitudes toward training children retain honesty as a goal. Honesty is still felt to be essential to civilized life, not only because it is "the best policy," not only because we respect it as a useful ethical ideal, but also because of the influence of scientific thinking. Today more and more people are dedicating themselves as a life work to science, which is simply the

pursuit of truth. The science of child psychology itself has arisen under this influence.

The more psychologists learn about the well-springs of human behavior, the better are they prepared to give parents insight into the conditions under which a child will make either evasive and deceitful, or honest and candid responses. As we learn more about the deeper relation of these responses to the inner emotional life and to the environment, we come to realize that deception is in the last analysis always a symptom of discord between an individual and life.

This understanding gives us clues to child guidance which are lacking in the older authoritarian view by which most adults of today were themselves reared. As long as deceit is considered "sinful" and parental duty must sit in judgment upon the offender and demand his reform, parents put an enormous burden on their own emotions. In one way, however, their doctrine was simpler; "yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin" had a satisfying finality which is lacking today. Presentday schools of psychology have



thrown much light on *why* children lie; but they do not pretend to offer a conclusive last word on prevention or cure. Upon the parent rests the responsibility of interpreting the findings of the scientist in the light of the child's needs and of applying them in everyday procedures.

When the very young child, still in the process of making his first discriminations and attaching the correct names to objects, makes a mistake, it is clearly recognized as a lack of precise knowledge and parents take great delight in supplying the missing information. There is no thought in their mind that the child intends to deceive. In her article on "Practices and Preachments" Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg points out that in this sense growth in truth telling is growth in more precise discrimination and more precise reporting.

It is, however, not long before the parent becomes aware of what appears to him deliberate subterfuge. When the child is about two, this shows itself in some such deceit as that of the toddler who, in the presence of a large family of adults, asked his mother to go out of the room and then immediately reached for the candy. Although this may be looked upon as smart or cute and condoned, if not applauded, its repetition begins to cause concern and alarm. All the prohibitions against dishonesty and trickery so painfully and arduously acquired by parents during the whole course of their education assert themselves, and on the child is hurled their cumulative weight.

### Pleasure versus Pain

BUT our new realization of the inherently amoral nature of the young child has left us free to interpret this so-called "deceit" in other than moral terms. From studies of instinct trends significantly disclosed by the psychoanalytic school of psychology, we learn of the pleasure-pain principle which so largely motivates the behavior of the infant and young child.

We observe that his whole nature is intent on procuring self-gratification and avoiding pain, and in this during his infancy we are his willing ally. We fly to him at the very first intimation of discomfort and both actually and vicariously enjoy his ensuing contentment. But gradually, almost imperceptibly our *rearing* becomes more and more *training*, that is, active rather than passive. Prohibitions and denials begin to thwart the child in his pursuit of pleasure. In the process of learning to be "reasonable," the necessity of these restrictions react to make the child seek all possible ways of reaching his pleasure goal. The experiment then, of the two-year-old, in temporarily

removing his mother, the source of prohibition, so that he might get the candies, can now be understood as just such a natural attempt to circumvent prohibition, and to avoid the restrictions which threatened to thwart him.

Are we to argue with some that, since it is the frustrated child who resorts to deceit, all prohibition is to be avoided if we are to establish honesty? Some educators indeed believe that children are essentially good, noble and sound, if only left unhampered by misguided and molesting adults. But to observe a group of children who are, for the time being, without adult contact is to be quickly dissuaded of this poetic philosophy. Here are two four-year-olds; trailing a fire engine, Ethel comes up to John who is riding a tricycle. She plays ostentatiously with the engine until he stops his tricycle to watch her. A moment later he dismounts to offer a suggestion as to how to play with the engine, whereupon Ethel, her spontaneous duplicity rewarded, leaps on to the tricycle and rides triumphantly off, with John ruefully pursuing her.

### The All-Powerful Adult

BUT most frequently it is the adults, because of their almost continuous presence and because of their great controlling power over desires and activities, who are often thought of by their children as arch opposers. If we add to these characteristics of the curtailing adult those of the dominating, severe and forbidding adult, we have a person who inevitably arouses fear. A child faced with such a person prefers to run the risk of lying, in the hope that he will not be detected, than admit his mischief and bear the severe inexorable punishment. These are the lies of necessity that have their roots in fear and are psychologically inevitable since the certain pain is too intense and must be avoided at whatever risk. A response which prefers submission to an unjust punishment is no longer considered heroic, as it was in the pages of *Elsie Dinsmore*, but suggests rather a pathological emotional tendency, the enjoyment of pain.

But even very benevolent and particularly the over-indulgent parents are on occasion surprised to find their children lying. A little girl of six came home from school one day and announced to her mother that she had won the coveted prize given to the child for the loveliest home-grown plant. The mother was delighted for she had supervised the project with warm interest. But the prize was not forthcoming. This child's eagerness to please her mother was so intense that it had nullified the facts for her. She

had been the center of adored attention as an infant and young child, but with the birth of a younger sister, she found herself no longer the center, nor so adored. A too great indulgence, with its inevitable wearing off, had led this child to seek any means to regain the intensive love she once enjoyed.

Education, as directed toward the instincts, demands that the "pleasure principle" which controls the behavior of the infant be gradually replaced by the "reality principle," that is, by the necessity of self-control and the social cooperativeness which civilized life demands. It is still the "pleasure principle" but modified and altered by compromise and renunciation. A certain degree of pain becomes endurable mainly because the more distant benefits are more clearly understood. The rewards for the acceptance of discipline, first in the love and approval of ministering adults, then in the realization of the benefits of self-discipline, become the means by which eventually civilized life itself becomes pleasurable. The art of education consists in so gauging the time and the amount of the restrictions and in making their reasonableness so comprehensible that they are accepted with the minimum of resistance.

Though both severity and overindulgence may induce deceit, unreasonable restriction is undoubtedly the more frequent cause. Hartshorne and May's extensive statistical *Studies in Deceit* brings out the fact, significant in this connection, that, grade for grade, children of progressive schools are less deceptive than those of public schools. Even without a full interpretation of this finding, one is probably justified in assuming that the personal freedom and earnest respect for each individuality in progressive schools, play an important part in minimizing temptation.

## The World of Fantasy

STILL other falsifications spring mainly from intra-psychic emotional tension rather than from environmental pressure; these are the fantasies in which every child indulges in varying degrees and at different times. For no matter how favorable the setting and how sound the understanding, the fact of being a child carries with it burdens which, in the light of the child's desires, are often felt as unbearable. It is through his fantasies that some of the tensions incident to the powerful inner conflicts are discharged. Out of the desire for power to overcome all adults and their ever present prohibitions comes the fantasies of the invincible hero to whom nothing is denied. Out of the deep resentment at having to share parents with other children comes the fantasy of the child who finds

that she is indeed a step-child and has been sought far and wide by the king and queen who finally come to claim her as their own. Such fantasies are, it is true, a form of deception, but it is self-deception without any conscious intent to gain advantage.

The establishment of a relationship between child and adult which makes it possible for the child to express his fantasies is already a long step toward keeping them from gaining too strong a hold upon him. Every effort should be made to help him externalize them not only verbally and dramatically, but also in activities which give realistic support to his self-esteem.

There is also a somewhat different form of fabrication, a form which, though primarily rooted in self-deception now attempts to deceive others also. A child tells to outsiders semi-plausible tales of the wealth or power of his family and finds, perhaps to his surprise, that his tales are believed and his prestige enhanced. When parents become aware of this, some such simple statement as "That is the way you would like it to be, isn't it?" is sufficient to help the child to distinguish between the wish and the fact, and to show him that his parents also made this distinction. The next step is of course to guide him toward actual means of increasing his prestige.

Finally, there is a phase of group loyalty through which the socially normal youth passes when lying seems to him to be justified if the "honor" of the group demands it. Lying in relation to delinquency will not be discussed here because of its wide social ramifications and our special interest in the psychology of truth telling as related to the personal adjustments of the normal child.

We have attempted to show in this article the psychological mechanisms which influence the child's development toward the adoption of truth telling as a conscious policy. Among the obstacles the child must surmount, we have noted ignorance of actual facts, the experimental tendency to use lying as one means of avoiding restrictions; the fear of parental severity or of loss of love, the natural tendency to fantasy, the conscious desire to gain prestige, and loyalty to the gang. We have also suggested the psychological aids which are our best allies in helping the child toward truthfulness. Among these are an accurate gauging of a given child's capacity to accept restrictions of his amoral pleasure drives and an objective attitude toward them. Still more important, however, are the positive contributions of the parents in love and sympathetic support and a reliableness in their own behavior which will firmly establish the child's confidence in them.



# Book Reviews

## *Truth: Many Interpretations*

JOSETTE FRANK

TEACHING "truthfulness" to children has been a matter of concern to parents since the Ten Commandments were revealed to the prophet on the Mount—no doubt even before that, since the Commandments against stealing and bearing false witness must have been promulgated to meet a felt need of the race. It is not surprising, therefore, that all through the literature which deals with childhood education and training, or which has reference to parental relationships with children, we find evidences of deep concern for the child's behavior with respect to truth.

There are to be noted, however, two significant trends in modern thought on this subject as reflected in the literature of our time. In the first place, we see in recent writings a tendency no longer to consider truthfulness solely from the point of view of morality and righteousness. To live a truthful life remains the standard of behavior to be striven for. But the various deviations from truth—lying, stealing, evading—are seen, not as natural sinfulness, but rather as indications of the individual's difficulties; of some failure, in no matter how small a degree, to meet the realities and demands of one's immediate world. This approach to the whole question of truth telling has led us to a new technique of examining into motivations rather than of punishing untruthfulness in the name of a righteous Lord.

So much the modern psychologist has taught us. But the philosopher, too, has taken an interest in this whole matter of truth telling, and has challenged us with an inquiry into basic concepts. "What is truth?" Since, in order to teach our children truthfulness, we ourselves must first know truth, this inquiry suggests a new direction to our processes of education.

Nor is this challenge as "modern" as we moderns are inclined to think. It is somewhat astonishing to those of us who think of this questing after truth as a pastime of twentieth century sophisticates, to find in an issue of *The Mother's Magazine*, for October 1833, an admonition to mothers to "inculcate truth as truth and opinion only as opinion." The fact that the advice in this instance emanates from a religious source and refers particularly to religious education is espe-

cially astonishing; but certainly we might also apply its solemn dictum to all fields of thought:

*"Nor should we keep children in ignorance of disputed points, merely because they are disputed. We do not for such reasons leave our pupils with a partial and defective knowledge of scientific and literary subjects. . . . In endeavoring to give instruction, we must be careful that we do lead our charge in a direct path to the attainment of truth. We must not impose on their inexperience and confidence, nor take advantage of their limited and partial views, to bias their minds in their infant efforts at investigation."*

"While children are very small, truth and the opinions of parents are synonymous terms; and under this training, would they not, as they grow older, be acquiring at the same time an intelligent and confident belief of many things, and a disposition fearlessly, yet cautiously, to search the scriptures in regard to others. . . . At any rate this course is the only upright and honest mode of dealing with the free created mind."

Despite this extreme liberality of viewpoint—matching the attitude of our "new education"—there was, nevertheless, then as now, a fervent ideal of rectitude. Upon the parent rested the responsibility for educating the child in moral honesty. In the same magazine, in 1834, we find a series of articles on *The Secret of a Mother's Control Over the Conscience of Her Son*:

"The mother who has a conscience to control must . . . carry her hand steady, she must always believe the same truths, and correct from the same sentiments, and on the same maxims. . . . The same principles of moral honesty, for instance, must be ever in prompt and ready operation. . . ."

"The mother that would . . . put forth this mighty control over the conscience of her son, *must begin early*. . . . The child should begin to have a conscience before he knows the use of it, and should begin to seek after moral truth as soon as he begins to be pleased with any visible and tangible object."

This ideal of inculcating truth as morality in the young has persisted in much of the subsequent literature addressed to parents, though the religious fervor has given place to a more tempered ethics. Felix

Adler, for example, in his *Moral Instruction of Children*, published in 1892, urged the establishment of truthfulness by precept and example as "moral duty."

Combining psychology with social ethics A. E. Tanner, writing in 1904 in *The Child*, advised:

"The first lies of children, where they are not purely imaginative . . . should be carefully dealt with, because they grow into deliberate lying. They usually occur . . . because they are of use to a child in some way. The best way to deal with them must vary according to the disposition of the child. He must in one way or another learn that social disapproval always follows such an act, because if people generally lied, social life could not exist. On the other hand, when he has done any kind of wrong, the treatment of him should be such as to induce repentance instead of fear, so that the next time he does wrong he will not be tempted to lie to escape punishment. Where there are confidence and wise government, the lie problem will not be so pressing as where there are fear and too great restriction."

Coming down to current literature we find that modern psychologists, less concerned with moral preachments than with the springs of human behavior, have noted the almost universal tendency of young children to untruthfulness. Investigating this phenomenon they have begun by breaking up "lying" into catalogues of motivation. In his *Child Psychology*, John J. B. Morgan classifies and analyzes the following "kinds of lies":

*The playful lie*—the make-believe play of the imagination, expressing reality as the child would like it to be; *the lie of confusion*—where the untruth results from inability to report with accuracy; *the lie of vanity*—designed to draw attention to one's self; *the lie of malevolence or revenge*—obviously motivated by hate, some unfortunate incident having made the child hate people in general, or one person in particular; *the excusive lie*—the result of fear of threatened punishment or censure; *the selfish lie*—coldly calculated to deceive others so that one may get what he wants; *the loyal or conventional lie*—done to safeguard a friend or out of consideration for the feelings of others.

The psychoanalyst delves still deeper for an explanation of this universal tendency in children, and finds his answer in the realm of the unconscious.

"Considerable study and experience convinced me," says A. A. Brill in his *Fundamental Conceptions of Psychoanalysis*, "that the lie, like the dream, is nothing but a direct or indirect wish. . . . That the 'white lie' is just another mode of self-protection . . . is well borne out by the fact that primitive

people and lower races . . . invariably lie when they wish to get out of some difficulty. The same condition obtains among children. They invariably show a tendency to fabricate. Such a tendency among children cannot be considered pathological. It simply denotes a premature mentality; children, as we know, have not as yet assumed all the necessary ethical inhibitions and therefore follow their impulses. Whenever they find themselves in any difficulty they do not hesitate to get out of it through lying."

Brill goes on to point out the relation of the liar to the dreamer and the poet: If poetry "represents the fulfillment of our ungratified wishes and desires," he sees the same mechanism present in habitual liars and, to a lesser degree, in every normal person.

"What is the distinction between them? The normal dissatisfied person contents himself with fancy formation which he keeps to himself very carefully. . . . The liar has never outgrown his infancy, so that even as an adult his fancies, his wishes are of a childish nature; he is unable to adapt himself to reality, so that he constructs his world on the infantile foundation."

That the child's difficulty in learning to face reality is due in large measure to his parents' own failure to do so is another factor emphasized by the psychoanalyst. Healy, Bronner and Bowers, in *The Structure and Meaning of Psychoanalysis*, quote Ferenczi who "points out that the child can come to terms with all other external objects sooner than he can with his fellow creatures. One great difference between other objects of the external world and people is that the former never lie. For a long time the child is deprived of discovering errors in the statements of his parents because 'they impress him so much from the beginning with their real and supposed omnipotence that he does not dare to doubt them'; also he is often prohibited from making efforts to convince himself of the correctness of adults' statements. Ferenczi contends that innate tendency and educational influences cooperate to bring about an attitude of blind belief on the part of the child."

It is with this "blind belief" no less than with the authoritative attitude upon which it is predicated, that the philosopher takes issue. How do we know what is truth? Authoritative religion and dogmatic morality are not enough. If we are honestly to help the child differentiate between the false and the true we must, to begin with, come to terms with ourselves in our own search for ultimate truth.

But the quest for ultimate truth is not simple. Shall it be the "truth" of science or the "truth" of metaphysics? Joseph Wood Krutch, writing of *The Mod-*



ern Temper, sees many views of what he calls The Phantom of Certitude:

According to the pragmatic view, "consistency with known facts and fruitful workability are . . . the only characteristics by which we would ever be able to recognize Truth if we found it, and consequently should constitute a definition of Truth itself.

"And though this pragmatic point of view no doubt owed its development to the scientific spirit, its applicability in realms which science does not control is immediately apparent. In the hands of William James it became a defense of the rights of a will to believe—not, as seems sometimes to be assumed, whatever you would like to believe—but whatever would be useful and *not inconsistent with the known facts*. . . . According to this system of thought, anything may legitimately be regarded as true provided only that it is (1) pleasant to believe and (2) not clearly demonstrable as false. . . .

"Science, to be sure, cannot prove that any 'spirit not ourselves' desires that men be honest; science may even assert from its study of the origin of morality in primitive societies that a belief in good and evil as mystical realities grew up merely as a result of the practical value of such a belief. . . . But metaphysics would reply, first, that ethics may have emerged from custom . . . and, second, that this possibility is transformed into a certitude by the fact that a belief in it results in a flowering of the human spirit.

"Now this fundamental attitude is capable of appearing under various guises. It may even form the basis for a renewed acceptance of some old religious faith. . . . It may be taken to mean that two different sorts of reality equally solid and 'really real' exist side by side in spite of the fact that they never touch and that, for example, the statement that morality and mores are identical may be completely true in one realm and completely false in the other, or it may, on the other hand, be taken only as a sort of metaphor which is used to suggest that certain fictions like 'morality' may be made to serve our purpose quite as well as if they had a real existence in nature."

Thus in our eagerness to teach our children truth we are challenged to pause and give thought to our own working hypotheses. What shall we teach as truth? What as morality? What as a workable basis of social ethics? This is not to say that we shall send our children forth into a complex world with no more substantial guidepost than the poet's simple formula:

"Beauty is truth, truth, beauty,"—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

But rather we shall recognize that truth, like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder.

## The Real World in Children's Books

*Clear Track Ahead!* By Henry B. Lent. The Macmillan Co. 84 pp. \$2.00.

*Clear Track Ahead* is a simple and dramatic exposition of trains and the men who run them: how the signal lights work, what happens in case of a wreck, the operation of the round house and other absorbing details. The book is divided into two parts: Here Comes the Fast Freight gives an excellent picture of freight loading and transportation. The second part, The Boston Express, recounts the incidents of a passenger trip to Boston. Many clear illustrations in black and white help to make this graphic account a fascinating one for the boy of five to nine.

G. G. E.

*The Romance of the Merchant Ship.* By Ellison Hawks. Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 319 pp. \$3.00.

A glance at the captions and many superb illustrations of *The Romance of the Merchant Ship* engages the interest at once. It is a complete story of ships from the time of the Egyptian vessel and the Greek bireme on through the centuries. Here is romance in an unfolding panorama of explorers' ships, of famous sailing vessels, of the coming of the steamship, the iron ship and, finally, the transatlantic liner of today. Aside from its sheer drama, the enthusiast on boats will find in this book a wealth of fascinating information. The presentation is well planned and the material is arranged into short readable chapters.

G. G. E.

*Black on White and What Time Is It?* By M. Ilin. J. B. Lippincott Co. 135 pp. and 132 pp., respectively. \$1.50 each.

The author of *New Russia's Primer* has given us again two unique contributions to informative literature for children.

*Black on White* tells the story of the making of records and of books. The theme is related to the whole history of mankind, with the historic aspects and technical details compared to the present and the familiar. The author knows just what will interest children and approaches his material from that point of view. His presentation is scholarly but is enlivened by both vivid imagery and humor; while his simplicity of style with its personalized intimate note makes a sure appeal to the reader, young or old.

*What Time Is It?* tells the story of the many time-telling devices invented (Continued on page 30)

# Parents' Questions and Discussion

*This study material is presented for the use of interested individuals or groups having the topic of this issue on their regular programs. The study outline is based on the articles. Questions and discussion are taken from study group records.*

## STUDY GROUP DEPARTMENT

CÉCILE PILPEL, Director

JOSETTE FRANK, Editor

*Will lying, if unchecked, lead to stealing or other forms of dishonesty?*

There is no necessary correlation between lying and stealing. The nature of the lying, and its immediate cause, as well as the age of the child and his degree of maturity and responsibility in other matters, will be an index of whether or not the situation calls for serious concern. The particular difficulty that makes him resort to lying needs attention. We will do well to examine the whole situation, in order to help the child progressively to meet situations on a level of maturity commensurate with his age.

*A nine-year-old boy has several times stolen money from his mother's purse, and used it to "treat" his companions. How can this situation be handled?*

It seems likely that this boy is in dire need of winning favor in the sight of his comrades, and has so far found no other means of doing so. If this is the case, no amount of preaching on morality, ethics or the property rights involved will solve his problem. Punishments will only deepen the sense of inferiority with which he is already burdened, and possibly add elements of resentment. He probably needs some adult help in establishing a more equitable basis of social contact with his fellows. He can be helped to develop his abilities—and to evaluate his own contributions in other than material terms. Along with this he needs the assurance of being loved and accepted in the family life—of not being held up to demands and standards beyond his capacity. It

goes without saying that his allowance should be adequate for his legitimate social needs.

*A child of ten freely confesses having done forbidden things. Should his honesty in confessing be rewarded by omitting punishment?*

We have to consider what it is that we are trying to teach the child. Do we want him to believe that he will always escape the results of undesirable behavior by the mere acknowledgment of it? Shall we teach him that honesty always "pays," even to the point of offering an avenue of escape from the natural consequences of behavior? To be truly "honest" he will have to learn to face reality, to take responsibility for his own acts.

The question of punishment need have no relation to the confession of guilt, but would have to be determined on the basis of whether or not it would be conducive to better behavior.

*Should a girl of seven be told the truth about such possibilities as kidnapping and other threats to her safety?*

Certainly a child of seven, especially if she lives in a city or suburb and has some freedom of range, will be exposed to some undesirable risks against which she needs protection. The alternatives are to acquaint her with the possible dangers and how to meet situations which may arise, or else to keep her under the constant supervision of adults. Since freedom from constant adult surveillance is important for the child's development of initiative and independence, the other alternative would seem to be the only possible one. If the child is given an explana-



tion of what is involved in kidnapping and other threats to her safety, in terms which she can understand, the emphasis will be on caution rather than fear. The child who is otherwise emotionally secure will accept this information as a challenge to her ability to take care of herself, rather than as a danger to be feared.

*Should a mother whose marriage has not been a happy one tell her adolescent daughter the truth about the situation?*

If the daughter has been living at home she can hardly have grown up totally unaware of the unhappy parental relationship. This knowledge must already be troubling her though she may not feel free to discuss the matter. A frank presentation, on the part of the mother, of the difficulties of her

married life, with fairness to both herself and the father, may help the daughter to understand, without jeopardizing her ideals and faith in the possibility of happiness in marriage.

*How shall we answer the child's question, "Who made the world?"*

For the very young child the simplest answer will suffice. The older child can be told that the question cannot be answered in that way. We can give him our concepts in terms of religion or science or both. In any case it is not enough to dismiss the question with "I don't know." The child is in search of some working concept. We give him, in this as in all our other answers to his questions, what we know and what we believe.

## STUDY MATERIAL: LEARNING THE TRUTH

### TOPICAL OUTLINE

#### 1. What is Meant by Truth

Small child's need for objective realism  
Practice in accuracy of observation and report  
Level of maturity of individual gauged by honesty  
An index of degree of civilization of large groups  
Tolerance

#### 2. Obstacles to Development of Truth

Impossible standards of achievement  
in home  
in school  
among peers  
Faulty discipline  
severe punishment  
Bribery  
laxity and indifference  
Rigidity of ethical code  
Bad environment

#### 3. How Children Acquire Idea of Truth

Repeated practice with attendant satisfaction in truthful expression  
Grading of tasks to child's growing power  
Grading of concepts to child's growing understanding  
Example of others  
Freedom from fear and undue constraint

4. What evidence is there in public or commercial life today of a more discriminating standard of honesty than formerly?

5. How can our ordinary disciplinary procedure of rewards and punishments undermine a child's sense of truth? Illustrate.

6. Can a small child be generally truthful and yet not be rude?

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- Your Child Today and Tomorrow**  
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The Child Study Association of America February 1931

### PROBLEMS

- How is training in accuracy of speech and interpretation related to development of truthfulness?
- In what sense is truthfulness learned? Are there hereditary factors involved? Discuss.
- Parents and teachers in their actions sometimes fall short of the high standards they hold up to their children. Can they hope to influence their children for the best in spite of their own shortcomings?

# In the Magazines

*An Adventure in Cooperative Mothering.* By Florence H. Hooke. *The Parents' Magazine*, July 1932.

Describing the plan and procedure of a nursery school where mothers are the leading power—an interesting community project.

*Fear not the Future.* By M. Antoinette Cannon. *The Family*, July 1932.

An interesting discussion of the future as the social worker sees it. The author suggests the reconciling principle between Utopianism and acquiescence, "active participation in endless change."

*Habits; Their Formation, Their Value, Their Danger.* By Douglas A. Thom. *Mental Hygiene*, July 1932.

Dr. Thom describes habits in terms of behavior reactions to "the environment and the experiences to which the individual has to adjust." Practical situations illustrating the writer's theory are given.

*A Home for Hobbies.* By Ethel Bowers. *Recreation*, July 1932.

The writer tells of a visit to the Westchester County Center, White Plains, New York, where all types of creative activities are in progress for all who have the urge to express themselves.

*The New Method in Education.* By Maria Montessori. Reprinted from the *Saturday Review* by *The Education Gazette*, July 1932.

Dr. Montessori restates her philosophy of education and proceeds to show how to approach the child in the capacity of teacher on the basis of that philosophy.

*Psychological Realities and Case Work.* By Grace Marcus. *The Family*, July 1932.

An answer to the question, "What value can involved psychoanalytical data have for us case workers?" The paper refers to Franz Alexander's article in the same issue entitled, "Contribution to Psychological Factors in Anti-Social Behavior."

*A Psychologist Looks at Mental Hygiene.* By E. A. Bott. *Mental Hygiene*, July 1932.

A review of the developmental history of psychology and mental hygiene suggesting that the two schools have much in common. Both aiming to deal with people as one finds them, the one (psychology) finding the principles that underlie human actions, the other (mental hygiene) evaluating conditions that contribute to the individual's adjustment.

*Vocational Guidance for Boys.* By Benjamin C. Gruenberg. *The Delineator*, July 1932.

"What kinds of occupations are there? How can a boy find out what particular choices there are for him?" The answers given here indicate a wide difference in emphasis on the vocational guidance of the present as compared to the days of Benjamin Franklin.

*Vocational Guidance for Girls.* By Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg. *The Delineator*, August 1932.

The emphasis is again put on the social and economic changes affecting home and homemaking. The point is made, however, that the girl's problem is not the same as her brother's. Nor is it a simple one in spite of the professional and industrial opportunities open to her.

*Secondary Education and the Social Problem.* By George S. Counts. *School Executives Magazine*, August 1932.

Dr. Counts relates the weakness of our educational system to the weakness inherent in a social system from which society is suffering. He uses the term "educational system" to include all formative agencies and influences in our society. One of the significant contributions of secondary education toward a solution of the social problems is the social attitude and power of leadership of the teacher.

The first issue of the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, a new journal to be devoted to theoretical, clinical and applied psychoanalysis, has recently appeared. Though its prime objective is to stimulate American work and provide an outlet for it, the editors maintain a close collaboration with associates abroad, many of whom are active as contributing editors. The journal has been established "to fill the need for a strictly psychoanalytic organ in America, where, although Freudian analysis has been received more favorably than in any other country, it nevertheless is exposed to the danger of misrepresentation and dilution with ideas foreign to it both in respect to theory and methods."

The first issue contains an article by Sigmund Freud on Libidinal Types. Among the other contributors are A. A. Brill, Bertram D. Lewin and Frankwood E. Williams. The journal is published by the Psychoanalytic Quarterly Press, 372-374 Broadway, Albany, New York.



# News and Notes

UNDER the editorship of Dorothy Canfield Fisher and Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, *Our Children: A Handbook for Parents* will be published on October 17. Prepared and sponsored by the Child Study Association and published by the Viking Press, the volume brings together authoritative discussions in many fields related to parent education by specialists including Arnold Gesell, Bernard Glueck, William H. Kilpatrick, Adolf Meyer and many others equally well known.

Because it has grown directly out of the work of the Association and because the contributors have for more than a year given generously of their time in close cooperation with the Association's staff, the volume has a unity and a singleness of purpose not always found in symposiums. That purpose is to give parents the information they want in order to work out solutions to their own questions. Over more than four decades, the Child Study Association has met and talked with parents of every kind and has kept records of their questions—about home training, about diet and health, about conduct and discipline, about sex, society, schools, play; questions covering all the situations and special needs of childhood, from birth through adolescence, for the normal child as well as for the "problem child." Out of these actual questions has grown this book. It is in no sense a final word, but it represents the wisest and most helpful counsel that is available about children in the world of today. As such it is designed to serve as a practical and up-to-date tool for every parent and teacher.

The questions have been grouped in four main divisions: The Child's Growth and Development, The Child in the Home, The Child in the School, The Child in the Outside World. Each division has been assigned to a group of experts—thirty in all. Typical parents' questions have been printed at the beginning of each section; but the authors have had full freedom in their individual chapters.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher in her introduction says, "Marvelling, I lay down this collection of articles so carefully seriously written for the benefit of parents by distinguished specialists in medicine, psych-

ology, physiology and education and look back through the pages at the primitive parental prairie of the days when I was a young mother." As proof of how the moral atmosphere surrounding parenthood has changed in these thirty years, she refers to two "astonishing facts"—that an army of parents aware of their own need for education in the best sense of the word is ready for this book; and that the best specialists in so many fields should also be sufficiently aware of the importance of parent education to come together in this group enterprise.

## Revaluations in Home Economics

The American Home Economics Association held its twenty-fifth Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, from June 20 to 25. Revaluations in Home Economics was the central theme of the meeting, which included public sessions on the place of home economics in education, and the economic aspects of home management. At the business session, the part played by home economists at the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection and the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership was emphasized. More than one thousand high school and college home economics clubs were represented.

The Association announces that Lemo T. Dennis has been appointed field worker in child development and parent education. Dr. Dennis' experiences in Rochester with problem children, and in teaching home economics in schools and colleges, fits her to carry on along the lines already laid down and to develop others—especially the important one of home management as a factor in child development and family relationships.

## Nature in the Life of a City Child

The School Nature League is constantly broadening and developing along new lines, though as always one of its chief activities is supplying nature material to the New York public schools and encouraging the opening of additional nature rooms.

The League also gives illustrated talks to school assemblies and nature clubs, and helps direct their activities. It advises teachers in their nature programs, and publishes a monthly bulletin.

Books Wanted  
for Schools  
and Camps

Pioneer Youth of America for the past three years have been conducting play schools and camps for children of southern mill and mining towns during the summer months, and club activities during the winter. They have found a great need for books among the children as there are no library facilities whatever in these towns. Through various contributions they have already received a small collection of sixty or seventy volumes which they are planning to build up into a really adequate travelling library. Books on history, music, science and geography as well as fiction can be used if sent to the Pioneer Youth office, 69 Bank Street, New York, care of the Southern Work.

National  
Theatre  
Conference

At the meeting of the Iowa Drama Conference in February an event took place toward which the Tributary Theatres of the country have long been looking forward. This was the formation of the National Theatre Conference, a cooperative membership organization whose purpose is "to serve collectively the interests of the American theatre." In order to plan an intelligent program, a survey of its needs and opportunities is being undertaken by the Conference to be presented to the American Association for Adult Education.

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At a time during which the home has undergone spiritual and physical changes unparalleled in history, Martha Van Rensselaer devoted a lifetime to the new problems of homemaking which women were called upon to face. Her death on May 26 will not bring to a close the work for a better understanding of home needs and values to which she has contributed so clear a vision and such practical leadership. Miss Van Rensselaer was head of the home economics department of Cornell University, a department which she had seen grow under her own guidance during more than thirty years from extension work with farm women to include a full college course. In addition she was always active in many movements, including service as director of the home conservation division of the National Food Conservation Administration during the War and during the last two years as assistant director of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. The Child Study Association, like every other organization whose work is closely related to the vital interests of homes and families, will long remember her for her generous professional cooperation and personal friendship.

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## Headquarters Study Groups for 1932-1933

THE following brief descriptions of study group activity in the fields of child psychology and child training are purely suggestive of the scope and range of the work to be conducted this coming season at Association Headquarters under the leadership of staff members and other specialists.

*Our Children*—A series of discussion meetings on the nature of childhood and youth, with specific emphasis on normal development in relation to the child at home, at school and in the community.

*Infancy*—A brief reviewing of the child's biological background . . . Significance of early behavior traits, anxiety, contentment, submissiveness . . . Early food habits, routine of sleep, play, elimination.

*Preschool Child*—This group will study the forces which modify the behavior of the young child, with special reference to the underlying principles of emotional health. Family relationships and the prime importance of parental attitudes will be stressed.

*School Age*—Discussion will focus about situations created as the result of widening social relationships and contact with standards and personalities outside the home.

*Preadolescent Period*—To understand the developing boy and girl of the elementary and junior high school age attention must center around their daily life at home, at school and on the playground. Practical questions on physical development will be considered; also individual interests in reading, games and friendships.

*Adolescence*—This group will seek to interpret the adolescent's special needs and interests in view of his physical, psychological and social manifestations.

*Influence of Home on Child's Music Education*—Presentation and demonstration of singing, rhythm, instruments, the use of the victrola and other mechanical instruments, listening to radio, and books on and about music.

*Handcrafts and Play for the Growing Child*—The lectures are intended to furnish parents, who desire a better acquaintance with the possibilities of handcraft, opportunities for first-hand experience with materials and play likely to evoke activity from their children. The meetings will include demonstrations in handcraft, block building, painting, carpentry for the little child, and weaving, metal work, sewing, knit-

(Continued on page 28)



## CONFERENCE PERSONALITIES

John Dewey  
Professor Emeritus of Philosophy  
Columbia University.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher  
President, American Association  
for Adult Education; author.

Mrs. Howard S. Gans  
President  
Child Study Association.

Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg  
Director, Child Study Association;  
Lecturer in Parent Education,  
Child Development Institute  
Teachers College (Columbia).

William H. Kilpatrick  
Professor of Education  
Teachers College (Columbia).

I. Newton Kugelmess, M.D.  
Pediatrician.

Everett Dean Martin  
Director, The People's Institute.

Elton G. Mayo  
Professor of Industrial Research  
Harvard University.

Marion M. Miller  
Associate Director  
Child Study Association.

Henry Neumann  
Leader, Brooklyn Society for  
Ethical Culture.

Jesse H. Newlon  
Professor of Education and  
Director of Lincoln School,  
Teachers College (Columbia).

Cécile Pilpel  
Director of Study Groups  
Child Study Association.

George D. Stoddard  
Director, Iowa Child Welfare  
Research Station, The State University.

Jessie Taft  
Supervisor, Foster Home Department of the Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania; Instructor, Pennsylvania School of Social and Health Work.

Kimball Young  
Professor of Social Psychology  
University of Wisconsin

# TWO-DAY CONFERENCE of the CHILD STUDY ASSOCIATION of AMERICA

October 17-18  
1932



New York  
N. Y.

Monday, October 17

HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA

Grand Ballroom

Mrs. Howard S. Gans will preside at all Monday sessions.

—Morning Conference 10:00 A.M.

### All Children and the Individual Child

Jesse H. Newlon, Chairman  
I. Newton Kugelmess

Jessie Taft  
George D. Stoddard

—Afternoon Conference 2:30 P.M.

### The Role of the Home in Establishing Values

Henry Neumann, Chairman  
William H. Kilpatrick

Kimball Young  
Sidonie M. Gruenberg

—Dinner Meeting 7:15 P.M.

### Freedom and Indoctrination

Everett Dean Martin, Chairman  
Dorothy Canfield Fisher

John Dewey  
Elton G. Mayo

Tuesday, October 18

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

221 West 57 Street

—Morning Conference 10:00 A.M.

### The Outlook on Parent Education

Mrs. Howard S. Gans, presiding  
Sidonie M. Gruenberg—Report on European Educational Conferences of the Summer of 1932, including the Sixth World Conference of the New Education Fellowship.

### Some Distinctive and Specific Projects of the Child Study Association

Marion M. Miller, Chairman  
Committee reports

—Afternoon Conference 2:30 P.M.

### Special Projects in Parent Education

Cécile Pilpel, Chairman  
Reports by representatives of:  
Brearley School  
Lincoln School  
United Parents' Association  
Detroit Public Schools

Riverside Church  
Ethical Culture Schools  
American Social Hygiene Assn.  
N. Y. Board of Education

### Registration

Members, presenting membership cards, \$.50  
Non-Members, \$1.00, Accredited Students, \$.50

Dinner: \$3.00

ting for the child up to nine. The remaining four lectures will be given in party activities and equipment, art (sketching, sculpture, wood blocks), nature collecting, and literature.

*Psychological Factors in Adjustment*—A Columbia University Extension course accepted by the New York Board of Education for alertness credit.

Registration will take place at Headquarters from October 18 to 21. For further information apply to the Study Group Secretary, 221 West 57 Street, N. Y.

The activities of the Child Study Association for 1932-33 are described in the following two programs which may be had upon request.

### STUDY GROUPS LECTURES — CONFERENCES

European Educational Conferences Mrs. Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, Director of the Child Study Association, has recently returned from abroad where she attended the Sixth World Conference of the New Education Fellowship, at Nice, and the International Conference of Social Work, at Frankfurt. A more detailed account of the Conference programs will appear in the November issue of *CHILD STUDY*.

Activities in the Summer Play Schools Under the auspices of the Summer Play Schools Committee of the Child Study Association, fifteen Summer Play Schools opened their doors on July 11. It has been very gratifying to note that the individual organizations conducting these schools despite their financial difficulties were able to offer this service to neighborhood children, during the summer. About twenty-five hundred children attended these schools, located in Manhattan, Bronx and Queens, serving principally neighborhoods where congestion and poverty exist.

During the spring, the Summer Play Schools Committee offered Play School teachers the opportunity for special training in curriculum and teacher-child relationships. This program was carried out by

means of discussion groups led by members of the staff of the Association. These groups were pre-eminently practical and well suited to the needs of those who attended.

The Board of Education continued its cooperation this season by furnishing teachers, supplies and equipment. Through the Teachers' Emergency Relief Fund, lunches were provided for children in several schools. The Board of Health also cooperated by sending physicians who gave the children periodic health examinations.

Parent education, which the Child Study Association has continuously worked for, is carried on in all these centers by the Summer Play Schools staff. Group meetings were held with parents, and individual conferences arranged for those whose problems needed special consideration. Parent education in the Summer Play Schools is an integral part of the program and is continued throughout the year so that the practices and procedures of the Play School may be carried into the home.

One of the new schools was organized at Sunnyside Gardens, Long Island City. This school was unique in several respects. The children who attended, in most instances, came from homes of a higher economic and social level than those served in most of the other Play Schools. Since they lived near by they were able to go home for luncheon and rest period. All of the activities were carried on out-of-doors except on rainy days, and it was amazing to see the ingenuity that was used to make the program appealing to this group of one hundred children.

The shortage of funds limited the activities of many of the fifteen Summer Play Schools, and general outings for large groups were few. The children did have the opportunity, however, to take short trips in their own neighborhood and to become acquainted with the facilities that lay close about them. The program was planned to meet the immediate needs of the children and was related to their own experiences and environment. Activities in the schools included a great deal of shop work with very simple tools and material, drawing and painting, music, swims and showers, and lunch and rest period. Health, as such, was not taught directly, but was incorporated in the program. Altogether the Play Schools provided a happy constructive summer program.

Broadcasting Program Practical talks on child study topics and discussion of relevant questions will constitute the weekly radio program of the Child Study Association.



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## Practices and Preachments

(Continued from page 6)

very attempt to seek security in secretive withdrawal from the disagreeable is for the child a first lesson in deceit and misrepresentation, or an early propulsion from reality into the world of make-believe. So much of falsehood is at every stage a manifestation of fear; the parents who fear to let the child learn of anything short of perfection are already teaching him to resort to evasion and subterfuge when danger or the disagreeable threatens.

### The Seamy Side

IT is as necessary for the child to learn in due course that there is pain and death as it is for him to learn that there are better and poorer ways of using his time, his talents, his resources. It is not necessary to seek occasions for inflicting pain, nor to expose a child to sickness; but neither is it necessary to keep him in physical swaddlings, or in their spiritual counterparts, for life consists of meeting obstacles and dangers, of combating enemies and postponing death. In a true sense the flight from unwanted situations is a flight from life itself.

Of course we have to set up high standards, of course we wish to surround the child with beauty and fine sentiment and lofty aspirations. And of course we wish to maintain constantly a routine that makes for candor and confidence and genuineness, just as we wish to maintain a routine that makes for physical health. And yet we have to recognize, and we have to let the child recognize, that these practices which we maintain, these standards which we uphold, are not the casual and "natural" way of human living, but achievements to be reached only after ages of struggle and through persistent effort on the part of each individual.

We all attach a certain absolute virtue to truthfulness and hope to see children grow up into honest men and women. Yet it is evident that the preachings of the past have not very effectively inculcated honesty as the characteristic virtue of our common life. On the contrary, one of the distinctive characteristics of our common life is the prevalence of a childish reliance upon wishes and magic to bring us good fortune—a reliance upon what the physicist would consider a basic fallacy, namely the expectation of getting something for nothing. The assumption that we can attain universal prosperity by buying things from each other at a low price and then reselling them to each other at a profit modifies much of our economic life. For this situation no one

of us is of course responsible. But when parents set out to cultivate forthrightness and probity they should at least know what the situation is, what it implies, what it demands of the individual. The parent must in the end interpret to the child both the meaning of the conflicts and difficulties that lead to lying and stealing and evasion, and the various acceptable methods of managing these difficulties. For the most part, too, teaching will come through the daily living rather than through the effort to impress the child with sound precepts; for, at every stage, we are teaching, not good words about righteous living, but the way of life.

Reverence for the truth does not demand of us that we accept everything as we find it merely because *it is so*. Neither does regard for the ideal require of us that we deny the harsh and disagreeable in reality. The crown of all our efforts, for whatever value it may have, can be attained only as we face and understand and master what is, that we may bend it to serve our deepest wishes.

### Children's Books

(Continued from page 21)

by man throughout the centuries: sun dials, stars, gnomons, water clocks and spring clocks. The story is told simply but with due regard for historical continuity. The data is comprehensive and is explained with great clarity. There are concrete examples from Russian sources. The presentation is somewhat more technical than in *Black on White* since the book is addressed to the older child or the factory worker.

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*Heroes and Hazards.* By Margaret Norris. The Macmillan Co. 184 pp. \$2.00.

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# The Editors' Page



ARE parents, even those conscientiously familiar with such terms as habit formation and personality development, quite clear in their own minds as to the goal toward which they are training their children? Or is there danger that their very zeal may make them unduly concerned about isolated bits of undesirable conduct? Are they losing sight of the fact that training must be considered in terms of months and years, rather than in terms of days and weeks?

IN the struggle for perfection they may be in danger of substituting permanently unhealthy attitudes for temporarily undesirable behavior. The drooling and irritability that go with teething are looked upon as one of the normal, natural phases of infant growth; even an attack of measles is regarded as one of the almost inevitable vicissitudes of childhood. So also some kinds of behavior—temper tantrums, for instance—occur with such striking regularity in the course of any normal child's development that they must be looked upon as normal, natural phases of the growing up process. If parents become oversolicitous in their efforts to prevent all these experiences, they are in danger of interfering with the child's normal development and of making him an overprotected weakling.

PARENTS can best serve the needs of the child by instituting a broad comprehensive plan of education. They will give due weight not only to establishing desirable habits, but also to developing mature attitudes toward life, and acquiring personality traits in keeping with the child's years. They will seek to free him in so far as possible from such feelings as insecurity, inferiority, fear and resentment, which tend to warp his point of view, and to help him realize for himself his obligations and responsibilities as well as to his opportunities and privileges.

*Douglas A. Thom.*

# CHILD STUDY

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